

# CONNECTIONS

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## De-Escalation Tip of the Day: Set Limits

By Emily Eilers, Crisis Prevention Institute

When it comes to de-escalation, limit setting is a highly effective and positive way to redirect a person in distress. It's also a very good way to keep your own approach focused and constructive, instead of reactive and argumentative. Here are some of our best resources for setting limits and de-escalating crisis scenarios safely:

- Learn CPI's **5 Easy Tips for Effective Limit Setting**
- Learn CPI's **6 Verbal and Nonverbal Limit Setting Strategies**
- Don't Wait for a Crisis: **Set Limits for Healthier Relationships**
- Download CPI's FREE Resource: **How To Set Limits**

## 6 Tips for Setting Better Boundaries

By Tina Gilbertson LPC, BC-TMH, *Psychology Today* (Used by permission of the author)

*Boundary setting is hard, but it beats the alternative.*

I'm still figuring out how to do boundaries well. Like many people, I'm pretty good at setting a boundary. But once that boundary is crossed, I get flummoxed.

I usually resent it when someone steps on my boundaries, because they're putting me in a position where I have to speak up for myself.

And that's uncomfortable.

So I'm continually working on boundaries in my personal life, and what I've discovered is that there's no reward for doing a good job.

When I manage to say "No" to someone (or put limits on how much I give) despite my guilty feelings about doing so, nobody gives me a medal.

I'm more likely to get a sour look than a prize for holding my boundaries.

That's what makes boundary maintenance so difficult.

What it comes down to, though, is a hard decision. I ask myself this:

Do I want to tolerate potential conflict by defending my boundaries, or do I want to feel resentful every time I let someone cross them?

Here's what I've learned about boundaries, and much of it I'm still getting the hang of...

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Greetings City employees!

This month, from February 25th – March 3rd is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. Our EAP office has assisted employees struggling with eating disorders in a variety of ways, such as providing a list of local counselors with specialization in eating disorder treatment, supporting and guiding employees and family members with loved ones requiring hospitalization, discussing how to start a conversation with someone who may have an eating disorder, and maintaining a resource list specific to eating disorder recovery. Whether it be an eating disorder or any other struggle in your or a loved one's life, please never hesitate to reach out to us. Our job is not to be an expert in all concerns around mental health and individual wellbeing, but to know local resources and help guide and support you on your terms as you work through any work or personal concerns that may be affecting your life, and if we don't know the answer to a question you may have, it is our job to work with you to find it out.

A special thank you to all employees who worked in the recent freezing temperatures to support the city. We appreciate you and all you do!



CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
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### Tips for Better Boundaries

1. **Get clear on exactly what the boundary is.** Where are you going to draw the line? Is it okay for your roommate to eat your food as long as she replaces it? Or is it simply not okay for her to touch your stuff? If you're not clear on what your boundaries are, others won't be either.
2. **Decide on consequences ahead of time.** What will happen if someone crosses a boundary? If there are no consequences, there might as well be no boundaries. Will you stop talking to them? Remove privileges? Go home? Withdraw financial support? Or simply call out their behavior? Something needs to happen when others step on your toes. What will it be?
3. **Expect violations.** You can be absolutely certain that if you set a new boundary with people who already know you, that boundary will be tested. That means repeated violations despite your protests. What are you going to do about it? The results of testing will be one of two outcomes: Either you'll prove that you don't really mean it, or you'll demonstrate that you do.
4. **Be consistent.** Testing takes place over time. If it's not okay to call you names today, it shouldn't be okay tomorrow. Your boundaries must not change with your mood, or you can't blame others for being confused about what's acceptable. Just as with parenting, rules need to be consistent to be taken seriously. Every time you allow a boundary to be violated without consequences, you're back to Square One.
5. **Get used to it.** Boundary-setting is not a single-shot deal. Once you set a boundary, the long-term work of defending that boundary begins. Accept your responsibility for speaking up and making sure that there are consequences every single time a boundary is crossed. Some people will "get it" right away, others will take longer, and one or two may decide never to respect a particular boundary. That's okay; they'll have to get used to the consequences. (But you might just be surprised how often old dogs can learn new tricks with consistent training.)
6. **Don't blame others for violating your boundaries.** First, people don't necessarily know where you stand, even if you think they should. Second, each of us is responsible for looking after our own interests. If I'm an adult, it's no one's job but mine to make sure I'm not disrespected, abused, taken advantage of, manipulated, or anything else that affects my well-being.

(Children, of course, need adults to protect them from these transgressions.)

But what about close relationships, you ask? Shouldn't family and friends respect each other's boundaries?

Why should I have to defend myself against boundary crossings by the very people who are supposed to love me?

In close relationships, it's customary to try to respect each other's boundaries. But we do this as a courtesy, not as an obligation, and nobody's perfect.

Let me know how it goes if you put these into practice.

... Or don't. It's up to you, of course. I can respect that.

### Set limits.

simple/clear  
reasonable  
enforceable



crisisprevention.com

### CPI's De-Escalation Techniques

*Due to the variety and nature of the work that many City employees do, there are times when employees may find themselves in an uncomfortable situation with a member of the public, or perhaps even another employee, who may be struggling with their mental health, has a cognitive or intellectual status different from our own, sees reality differently than we do, has a medical condition or medication imbalance, or has found themselves in an uncomfortable situation and is expressing themselves very inappropriately or perhaps even aggressively in the workplace. While we recommend calling 911 if anyone feels immediately threatened or unsafe for themselves or someone else due to the words or actions of another person in their work environment, sometimes situations do not rise to the level of contacting law enforcement, or you may find yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable or threatened but are unable to distance yourself from the individual making you uncomfortable, confused, afraid, or angry. Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) is a widely utilized and useful resource that teaches employees and organizations how to de-escalate disruptive and assaultive behavior in safe, non-violent, and respectful way, and they have developed a list of Top Ten De-Escalation Tips which the EAP will be providing to you in this and upcoming newsletter articles. If you have more questions on de-escalation in the workplace, you can confidentially contact the EAP at 266-6561 or you can view upcoming trainings offered by Human Resources on their [training website](#).*

# Implicit Bias and You

We all have biases. Often rooted in our subconscious, implicit bias reflects our feelings and attitudes about others based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and appearance. Beginning at an early age, these associations develop over the course of a lifetime and can impact our behaviors and lead to discrimination.

The good news? Bias is fixable. When we take time to interact with those who are different from ourselves, we adjust our bias and gain a more realistic understanding of and deeper appreciation for others. This is especially important for parents to consider as they make decisions about their children's experiences, relationships and upbringing.

To learn more about techniques for adjusting your own biases, or how you can help shape your children's attitudes about others in a positive light, join our February webinar.

Need help? Your EAP can provide additional guidance and resources.



## WEBINAR

02.20.19 11:00am CT

REGISTER

### Recognizing and Understanding Implicit Bias

Implicit bias: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our actions and decisions in an unconscious way. Discover where these biases come from and how they impact behavior as you learn to evolve your understanding of self and others

**Terri Howard**

Senior Director, FEI Behavioral Health

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resilience

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# Eating Disorders in the Workplace

by NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association)

Maintaining a healthy workplace environment is vital to the happiness and productivity of your organization. If an employee or coworker is struggling with an undetected eating disorder or disordered eating, it can take a major toll on them. Encourage eating disorders screenings to improve overall workplace wellness and to get help to those who need it.

## What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and OSFED (other specified feeding or eating disorder), are complex medical and psychiatric illnesses that can have serious consequences for health, productivity, and relationships. They are bio-psycho-social diseases caused by both genetic and environmental factors and are not fads, phases, or lifestyle choices.

Eating disorders are marked by extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding weight and food issues. In the United States, 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from a clinically significant eating disorder at some time in their life. These disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness and can become very serious, chronic, and life-threatening if not recognized and treated appropriately. The earlier a person seeks treatment, the greater the likelihood of physical and emotional recovery.

## What are the warning signs of an eating disorder?

- In general, behaviors and attitudes indicating that weight loss, dieting, and control of food are becoming primary concerns.
- Evidence of binge eating, including disappearance of large amounts of food in short periods of time or finding wrappers and containers indicating the consumption of large amounts of food.
- Evidence of purging behaviors, including frequent trips to the bathroom after meals, signs and/or smells of vomiting, or presence of wrappers or packages of laxatives or diuretics.
- Excessive, rigid exercise regimen—despite weather, fatigue, illness, or injury, the compulsive need to “burn off” calories taken in.
- Withdrawal from usual friends and activities.

## IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT IT

Early intervention saves lives, and our online screening only takes three minutes.

[www.myneda.org/screening](http://www.myneda.org/screening)

## How can eating disorders affect the workplace?

Eating disorders can affect anyone. High-performing, dedicated employees may struggle with disordered eating and poor body image, impairing otherwise excellent performance. Organizational leadership should encourage a welcoming and inclusive workplace, optimizing employee productivity and wellness.

As with many illnesses, eating disorders have serious health effects that, gone untreated, may lead to lost productivity and long-term medical problems. Early intervention and treatment are the best measures to ensure proper management of medical problems and encourage recovery.

Medical complications of eating disorders may include, but are not limited to:

- Anorexia Nervosa
  - » Heart failure
  - » Osteoporosis
  - » Muscle loss and weakness
  - » Kidney failure
- Bulimia Nervosa
  - » Heart failure
  - » Gastric rupture
  - » Tooth decay
  - » Peptic ulcers and pancreatitis
- Binge Eating Disorder
  - » Heart disease
  - » Type II diabetes mellitus
  - » Gallbladder disease
  - » High cholesterol

## NEDA HELPLINE

The National Eating Disorders Helpline offers treatment options & resources.

[www.myneda.org/helplinechat](http://www.myneda.org/helplinechat) • (800) 931-2237  
Crisis Line: Text NEDA to 741741

**DID YOU KNOW?** Help-seeking decreases significantly when people are not aware of the options available to them.

(Ben-Porath, 2002; Friedman, 2009; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2006; Gould, 2007)

## How can you help your workplace?

### 1. Educate Yourself

Learn more about signs and symptoms of disordered eating. NEDA's website offers a comprehensive overview of eating disorders information: [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn).

### 2. Share Your Concerns—Respectfully

- If you are concerned about someone at work, whether you approach them directly or go through EAP channels will depend on the nature of your relationship to that person.
- Regardless of your relationship to the individual, everyone has a right to privacy and confidentiality. Concern for another's well-being should only be expressed to an EAP staff member or to the person directly, never to other colleagues.
- If someone at work chooses to disclose their eating disorder to you, listen openly and reflectively, without judgment. Don't make accusations, use "I" statements, communicate your concern and support, and encourage them to speak with a professional.

### 3. Screen & Intervene

Early intervention and treatment are the best measures to encourage recovery. Work with your EAP to promote the screening tool: [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/screening-tool](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/screening-tool).

### 4. Take it to the EAP

Contact your Employee Assistance Program at 266-6561 for local resources or call NEDA for more information. NEDA's Parent Toolkit may be helpful to those supporting a loved one: [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/parent-toolkit](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/parent-toolkit).

## Nine Truths about Eating Disorders

by NEDA

- Truth #1: Many people with eating disorders look healthy, yet may be extremely ill.
- Truth #2: Families are not to blame, and can be the patients' and providers' best allies in treatment.
- Truth #3: An eating disorder diagnosis is a health crisis that disrupts personal and family functioning.
- Truth #4: Eating disorders are not choices, but serious biologically influenced illnesses.
- Truth #5: Eating disorders affect people of all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.
- Truth #6: Eating disorders carry an increased risk for both suicide and medical complications.
- Truth #7: Genes and environment play important roles in the development of eating disorders.
- Truth #8: Genes alone do not predict who will develop eating disorders.
- Truth #9: Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Early detection and intervention are important.



**COME AS YOU ARE**  
**NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS**  
**AWARENESS WEEK**  
 February 25 - March 3, 2019

#NEDAawareness

The NEDA Helpline is available Monday-Thursday from 9AM to 9PM ET, and Friday from 9AM to 5PM ET. Contact the Helpline for support, resources and treatment options for yourself or a loved one.

Please contact your EAP if you suspect you or a loved one may have an eating disorder and you would like to talk to an EAP professional about how an eating disorder may be impacting you in the workplace, and/or obtain support group information and local eating disorder specific counseling and treatment options.



You may reach the Helpline at  
**(800) 931-2237**

## Try a Little Kindness

by HeartMath Institute

Everyone loves that warm heart feeling they get when they do something kind for another. It's wonderful, right? Did you know kind acts—even secret ones—can do wonders for your physical, mental and emotional health? And there's another curious thing about kindness: It's uniquely contagious, kindness researchers say.

A study conducted among students at the University of British Columbia found that performing acts of kindness can help lower people's social anxiety, which often leads to negative self-beliefs and behaviors.

"We found that any kind act appeared to have the same benefit, even small gestures like opening a door for someone or saying 'thanks' to the bus driver," the published study states. "Kindness didn't need to involve money or time-consuming efforts, although some of our participants did do such things. Kindness didn't even need to be 'face to face.'"

Besides its potential for alleviating anxiety along with other health benefits, some of which are listed in this article, there is an infectious quality to kindness that goes deeper than simply being the popular thing to do in the moment.

It even goes deeper than what we know about the measurable energy exchange that occurs between two people when they touch. A simple example of this "touch energy exchange" is when someone extends the kindness of helping a stranger up from a chair: Chances are their touch didn't set off fireworks—though it happens—and they might never meet again, but studies show both giver and receiver change profoundly, if only for the moment. As they fan out in their circles of family, friends, co-workers, etc., what passed between them has the power to continue affecting others.

### Everyone Has Their Own Personal Magnetic Field

HeartMath Institute (HMI) explored touch energy exchange nearly two decades ago in its widely cited study, *The Electricity of Touch: Detection and Measurement of Cardiac Energy Exchange Between People*. [See the study](#).

In the years since that study, HMI has expanded its interest to a more profound way in which energy is circulated between and among people, even in large numbers. First, it is important to remember that the various processes and systems of the human body, and, for that matter, all living things, generate electrical energy.



Everyone has their own personal magnetic field—a local field environment—around their bodies. This is because the energy our bodies generate actually radiates outward. This magnetic field has been detected and measured as far away from the body as several feet using sophisticated magnetometer technology. (HeartMath's Global Coherence Initiative (GCI) also uses magnetometer technology in various parts of the world to monitor the earth's magnetic fields.) It is interesting to note the magnetic field produced by the heart is more than 100 times stronger than the field the brain generates.

What you contribute to the energetic field environment has consequences, but you likely already know this. For example, when you are considerate in carefully choosing your words or avoid being too loud, critical, etc., it is because you sense how you may be affecting the people around you. Why? To name a few of the reasons, we know such actions may upset people, raise their blood pressure or perhaps set a bad example for children.

On the other hand, we know without even thinking about it that being nice to others, considering their feelings or performing some act of kindness for them is a good thing. This is illustrated by the phenomenon of situational awareness in which someone can enter a room of people and immediately sense a distinct air of tension among them. Or, we can experience the opposite effect upon joining a group where there seems to be a palpable flow of positive energy and a comfortable ease with one another.

The collective magnetic energy fields of all human beings across the world comprise a global energy field, what HeartMath calls the global information field. In this field, HMI and GCI researchers hypothesize, biologically relevant information connects all living systems. All the emotions you feel, whether positive or negative, the energy you create, and your acts of kindness affect your field environment. You are sharing all of it with everyone around you.

## Ripple Effect of Kindness

Like the fanciful metaphor of a butterfly's fluttering wings changing the weather thousands of miles away, or the inspiration Olympians stir in people across the world, your emotions, feelings and choices matter. If you are angry when you come home after work, there's a good chance you will affect the moods of others in the house. That is unless, you choose to let go of your anger or if a family member's positive energy, such as an act of kindness, helps to brighten your composure. Your energy, actions and feelings are all "feeding the field."

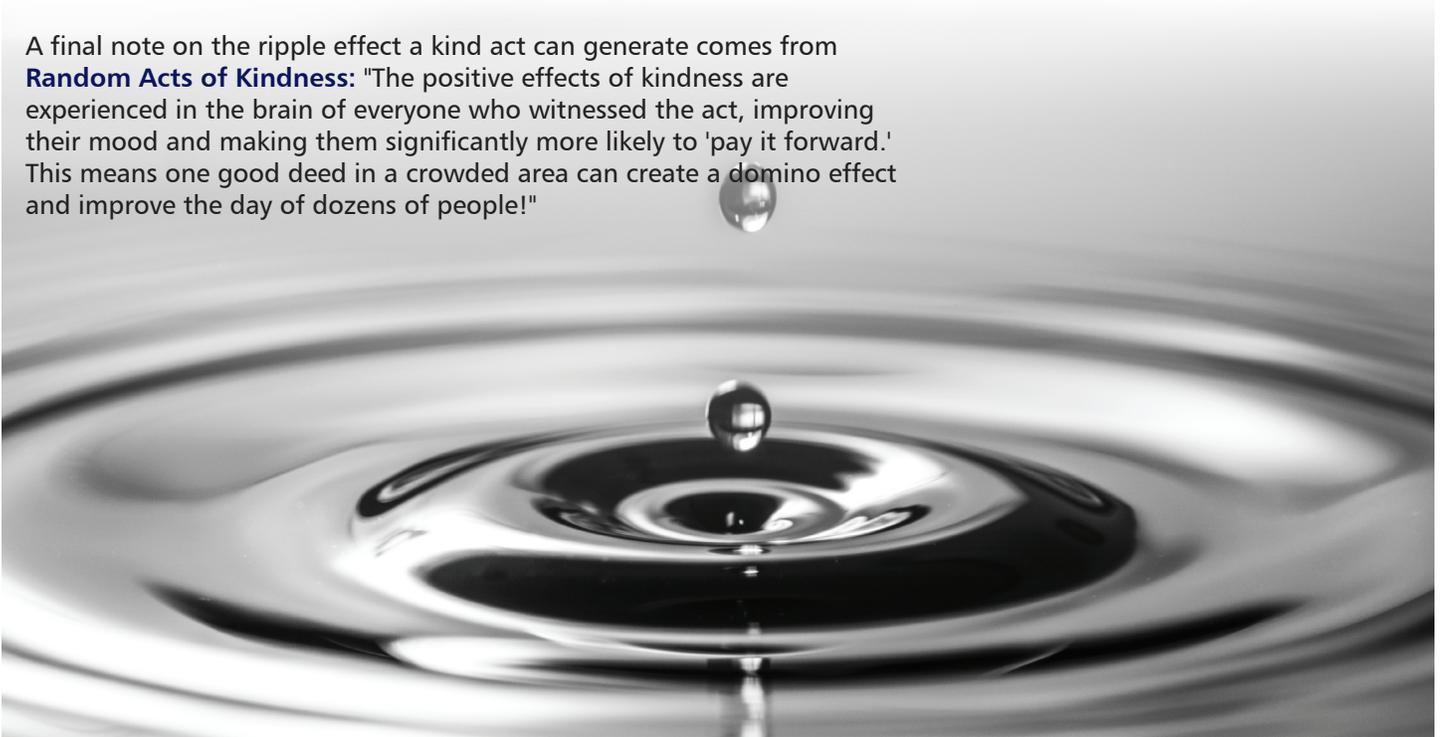
The distribution, intermingling and sharing of information in the global information field is part of a broader field of study HeartMath and the Global Coherence Initiative have been focused on in the last decade. It is called interconnectedness, the idea that all things are interconnected by our connections to Earth's magnetic fields.

A final note on the ripple effect a kind act can generate comes from **Random Acts of Kindness**: "The positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain of everyone who witnessed the act, improving their mood and making them significantly more likely to 'pay it forward.' This means one good deed in a crowded area can create a domino effect and improve the day of dozens of people!"

## Benefits of Kindness

Kindness studies over several decades have demonstrated these benefits, among many others:

- Longer lifespan
- Less stress
- Improved cardiovascular system
- Increased energy
- Improved immune system
- Lower risk for depression
- Stronger relationships
- Better performance at work and school



*Thanks for reading,  
we hope you found the information useful!*

**You can reach any of us by calling the  
EAP Office at (608) 266-6561**

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FEI Workforce Resilience (800) 236-7905**

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To learn more about your external EAP services, please contact FEI at 1-800-236-7905 or log on to [feieap.com](http://feieap.com) and type username: madison.